(b) Two posts of Vice-Chairman (Judicial) and 14 posts of Member (Judicial) are vacant.

(c) to (f) The vacancies of Vice-Chairman (Judicial) and Member (Judicial) were advertised in December 1992 and June 1993. Eligible candidates were interviewed in December 1993 and January 1994. Panel recommended by the Selection Committee has been approved. Offers of appointment for 2 Vice-Chairman and 11 Members have already issued and they have been requested to join by 31.8.94. Remaining offers will be issued on completion of formalities.

Operation of Luxury Tourist Trains

2225. SHRI VIREN J. SHAH:
SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the plan to involve the private sector in the operation of five luxury tourists trains;

(b) which are the proposed routes of the five luxury trains and by what time the proposed luxury trains are expected to become operational; and

(c) what will be the Railway's initial expenditure on these trains and how much annual profit is expected to be earned by the Railways from this scheme?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) to (c) Ministry of Railways have invited bids from Public and Private Sectors for ownership; Marketing and Management of Tourist Trains on the following routes:

1. Delhi - Jaipur - Agra - Gwalior - Jhansi - Varanasi - Lucknow - Delhi.
2. Goa (Madgaon) - Mangalore - Mysore - Hospet - Bangalore - Goa (Madgoan).
3. Bombay - Aurangabad - Nanded - Secunderabad - Hyderabad - Pune - Bomba ;.
4. Howrah - Gaya - Varanasi - Gorakhpur - Bhubaneswar - Puri - Howrah.
5. Bangalore - Mysore - Madras - Kodaikanal Road - Kanya Kumari - Trivendrum - Cochin - Mettupalayam - Bangalore.

In response to the global invitation to bid issued by the Ministry of Railways; twenty three bids were received upto the closing date i.e. 25th July; 1994. The bids are now being evaluated by the Tender Committee for awarding the contract to the successful bidder. Lead time for construction and launching of the tourist trains will be one year from the date of finalisation of contract. No expenditure is being incurred by the Railways as the capital cost and cost of haulage and maintenance is to be borne by the Tourist Train Operator. Besides these costs, the successful bidders will also be required to share a minimum 15 per cent of their gross turnover from the operation of the tourist train service.

..Reduction in working expenses..

2226. SHRI SUSHILKUMAR SAMBHAJIRAO SHINDE:
SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU:
SHRIMATI VEENA VERMA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that an action plan alongwith economy messures undertaken by the Railways in 1993-94 has resulted in reduction of working expenses to the tune of Rs. 200 crores during the year; and

(b) if so; the details of the measures taken?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) From 1989-90 onwards

in the beginning of the financial year, a series of steps were planned to be taken for augmentation of earnings and reduction of working expenses. This exercise was done every year. In the year 1993-94 also, on the basis of experience gained in the earlier year, a revised Action Plan was launched on the Railways to effect improvement in Operating Ratio by augmenting earnings and containing Working Expenses. Broad areas where economy in expenditure was to be effected are detailed below:

(i) Energy conservation;

(ii) Better asset utilisation,

(iii) Elimination of redundant activities and wastages like;

(a) Expeditious condemnation of Steam Locos, Steam Cranes. Steam Sheds etc.,

(b) Closure of redundant yards etc.,

(c) Critical control over consumption of high value items.

(iv) Cost control, cost reduction and cost effectiveness in all on-line and off line activities.

(v) Better Inventory control.

A saving of Rs. 200 crores was contemplated in the Revised Estimates of Ordinary Working Expenses which were fixed at 1.70 per cent lower than Budget Estimates 1993-94, This is after absorbing a number of post-budgetary factors the impact of which is about Rs. 200 crores. The targets fixed in this regard in Revised Estimates, have been achieved.

Construction of Railway Station at Senthil Nagar between Ambathur and Annanu; Madras

2227. SHRI N. GIRI PRASAD: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the public demand for privision of a Railway Station at Senthil Nagar between Ambathur and Annanur railway stations on Madras-Ttruvellore suburban section of Southern Railway is under Government's consideration for the last few years;

(b) if so; when the demand was originally made and what is the present stage of the proposal; and

(c) by when this project is expected to be approved and funds be sanctioned by Govrnment?

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C. K. JAFFER SHARIEF): (a) and (b) Demand from the local people for opening of halt station at km. 17/10 near Senthil Nagar between Ambathur And Annanur stations was originally received in 1985. The same was examined but not agreed to as it involved substantial capital cost and heavy recurring financial loss. This position still holds good even at present.

(c) Does not arise.

Procurement of Computer Soft-ware

2228. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that despite heavy investment on computer hardware for the computerised reservation and other EDT system on the Railways, no investment has been made for acquisition of computer soft-ware;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this affects the security, privacy and level of performance of the computerised system; and

(c) if so what steps have been taken by Government to procure such computer soft-ware and suitably upgrade/update it to meet the growing needs of the Indian Railways in the changing scenario?